

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, MILI, LE, IS, PLO, U.S.

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON CEASEFIRE

1. ISRAELI MILITARY FORCES WERE WITHDRAWN FROM LEBANESE
TERRITORY BY 1000 HOURS LEBANESE TIME, TODAY, SEPT. 26.
ALSO, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS, A CEASEFIRE IN
SOUTH LEBANON IS IN FORCE, AND THE MAINLINE PLO/FATAH
LEADERSHIP IS COMMITTED TO HONOR IT. A SERIOUS DANGER
EXISTS, HOWEVER, THAT REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS AND PER-
HAPS ALSO SOME UNDISCIPLINED ELEMENTS WITHIN PLO/FATAH

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RANKS WILL TRY TO UPSET THE CEASEFIRE BY ATTACKS ON THE
CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES OR ON ISRAEL. KATUSHA ROCKETS HAVE HIT
ISRAEL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OVER THE PAST 72 HOURS, AND THE
ISRAELIS ARE UNDER PUBLIC PRESSURE TO RETALIATE. YOU SHOULD
THEREFORE GET IN TOUCH IMMEDIATELY WITH THE HIGHEST AP-
PROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS:

-- ISRAELI MILITARY FORCES WERE WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON BEFORE 1000 HOURS, MONDAY, SEPT. 26. WITHDRAWAL WAS FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY A CEASEFIRE IN PLACE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS OF HEAVY FIGHTING. IF THE CEASEFIRE HOLDS, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AFTER A SHORT PERIOD TO CARRY OUT THE THIRD STAGE OF THE SHATAURA AGREEMENT, WHICH WOULD INVOLVE A REDUCTION OF PALESTINIAN MILITARY FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON AND A WITHDRAWAL OF THOSE REMAINING TO POSITIONS TEN OR MORE KILOMETERS FROM THE ISRAELI BORDERS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL MOVE INTO THE AREA TO ASSERT THE AUTHORITY OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT AND TO ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER, THEREBY PERMITTING MANY THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES DISPLACED BY THE FIGHTING TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND FARMS.

-- THE U.S. PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN CREATING THE CURRENT SITUATION WHICH, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY MONTHS, OPENS THE PROSPECT OF DEFUSING THE SITUATION AND ALLOWING THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND ITS AUTHORITY TO THE SOUTH. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR INTENSIVE EFFORTS. WE NEED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE PLAYED MAJOR ROLES IN ENDING THE CIVIL CONFLICT IN LEBANON LAST NOVEMBER, AND WHICH RECOGNIZE LEBANON'S ROLE IN AREA STABILITY.

-- IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE FRAGILE CEASEFIRE
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HOLD, SO THAT THE DANGEROUS SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION CAN BE STABILIZED. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT THE REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS IN THE AREA WILL DO THEIR BEST TO UPSET THE CEASEFIRE BY ATTACKING THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES OR ISRAEL. WE UNDERSTAND SOME REJECTIONISTS ARE TAKING CREDIT FOR THE RECENT KATUSHA ROCKET ATTACKS ON ISRAEL. WE HAVE BEEN COUNSELING RESTRAINT ON THE ISRAELIS BUT, IF SUCH ROCKET ATTACKS CONTINUE, THEY MAY DECIDE TO RETALIATE, AND THIS COULD MEAN THE COLLAPSE OF THE CEASEFIRE.

-- WE URGE THE HOST GOVERNMENTS, THEREFORE, TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE IN ALL APPROPRIATE WAYS--DIRECTLY AND THROUGH THIRD PARTIES--TO ASSURE THAT THE REJECTIONISTS OR EVEN UNDISCIPLINED ELEMENTS WITHIN PLO/FATAH RANKS DO NOT UPSET THE TENUOUS CEASEFIRE.

-- WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF THESE EFFORTS COULD COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY, INCLUDING APPROACHES TO IRAQ AND LIBYA IN CASES WHERE HOST GOVERNMENTS CONSIDER IT PRACTICAL. IF SUPPLIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, FOOD AND FUNDS TO THE REJECTIONIST BANDS IN SOUTH LEBANON CAN BE CUT OFF, SO MUCH THE BETTER.

-- IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT THE HOST GOVERNMENTS CONTINUE TO LEND THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATE POLITICAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT. IF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON IS STABILIZED, IT WILL CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT BOOST FOR THE AUTHORITY AND PRESTIGE OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT. THOSE FACTIONS IN LEBANON WHICH HAVE NOT COOPERATED WITH HIM FULLY MAY THEN BE INCLINED TO LOOK TO HIM FOR LEADERSHIP AS HE MOVES TOWARDS THE POLITICAL CONSENSUS WHICH IS SO ESSENTIAL FOR LEBANON'S LONG-TERM STABILITY.

-- FOR OUR PART, WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO MAKE POSSIBLE A STABILIZED SOUTH LEBANON. AMONG OTHER THINGS, WE HAVE MADE AVAILABLE DOLS 25 MILLION IN CREDITS SO THAT LEBANON CAN OBTAIN QUICKLY SOME CRITICALLY NEEDED

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MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR REBUILDING ITS ARMY. WE HOPE OTHER GOVERNMENTS WILL CONSIDER HELPING LEBANON IN THIS AREA ALSO.

2. FOR BEIRUT: CAST YOUR PRESENTATION IN TERMS OF EXPLAINING WHAT WE ARE DOING WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, BUT CONTINUE TO PRESS BOUTROS AND SARKIS TO DO ALL THEY CAN TO BRING AN END TO THE KATUSHA ATTACKS IN PARTICULAR.

3. FOR DAMASCUS: TAILOR YOUR PRESENTATION TO REFLECT THE FACT THAT WE APPRECIATE SYRIA'S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE AREA, INCLUDING THE NEGOTIATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT. ASSURE THE SYRIANS THAT WE WILL BE DOING OUR BEST TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE THIRD STAGE OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

4. FOR TEL AVIV: YOU MAY INFORM ISRAELIS WHAT WE ARE DOING WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO KEEP CEASEFIRE INTACT.

5. FOR JIDDA: WE HAVE NOTED SAUD'S COMMENTS IN JIDDA 6506 BUT BELIEVE YOU SHOULD NEVERTHELESS INCLUDE FINAL POINT IN PARA 1 ABOVE IN YOUR PRESENTATION. VANCE

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To: DAMASCUS BEIRUT MULTIPLE
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